

**fellowship
baptist
membership
class**

Fellowship Baptist Membership Class

Part 1: What is a Christian?

Essential Christian Doctrine and Beliefs

The scriptures¹

1. The 66 books of the Bible
2. Inerrant and infallible
3. Sufficient and clear

God²

1. God is eternal.
2. God is creator.
3. God is Triune.
4. God is good/just.
5. God is merciful and gracious.

Mankind³

1. Made in the image of God.
2. Made male and female.
3. Since the fall each person is born with an inherent sinful nature.

Sin⁴

1. An active rebellion against God.
2. A breaking of the law by either doing what the law of God forbids or not doing what the law of God requires.
3. A state of the heart that is bent away from God.

¹ 2 Timothy 3:15–17; Isaiah 8:20; Luke 16:29, 31; Ephesians 2:20. Romans 1:19–21; Romans 2:14,15; Psalm 19:1–3. Hebrews 1:1. Proverbs 22:19–21; Romans 15:4; 2 Peter 1:19, 20.

² 1 Corinthians 8:4 Deuteronomy 6:4 1 Timothy 1:17; Deuteronomy 4:15, 16; John 5:7; Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14. John 1:2, 3; Hebrews 1:2; Job 26:13. Colossians 1:16; Genesis 1:31. Romans 1:20.

³ Genesis 1:27, 2:7, Romans 3:23, Romans 5:12-19

⁴ Psalm 51:5, Ephesians 2:3, Colossians 1:21, Matthew 15:19

The Gospel⁵

1. No human can be right in God's sight since they are sinful and have committed sins. God, desiring to be just and merciful, sent Jesus to live the life that each sinner should live and died the death they deserved to die by suffering under the wrath of God during his crucifixion and death. Jesus was raised from the grave after three days and after revealing himself to his disciples and others, ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God.
2. By Jesus work we can be made righteous in the sight of God as he applies the work of Jesus to our account.

The person of Jesus Christ⁶

1. Jesus is fully God and became fully man through the virgin birth. He is like us in every way yet without sin. His death and resurrection are the basis of our salvation.

The Holy Spirit⁷

1. The Holy Spirit is the third member of the trinity. All believers are indwelt with and gifted by the Holy Spirit. These giftings are given for the good of the church.
2. The Holy spirit works to draw men to the Gospel.

Salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone⁸

1. We are saved by grace and not by works. No works that we could do can ever bring us into a right and saving relationship with God. Any reliance upon works will bring condemnation by God. Though salvation is not by works, a person who is saved will have changes and a growth in holiness.
2. We are saved through faith. Faith is the whole trust in the finished work of Christ alone for salvation. It is a reliance upon Jesus.
3. True saving faith always comes with repentance and a submission to the Lordship of Christ.
4. We are saved in Christ. There is no other way or religion by which people can be saved. We are only saved by the work and grace of Jesus Christ.

Perseverance of the saints⁹

1. All those who truly believe will make it to the end because God will complete the work that he has begun in us.

⁵ John 3:16, Romans 3:23-29, 1 Corinthians 15:1-8, 1 Tim 1:15-17

⁶ John 1:14, Heb 4:15, Luke 1:27-35

⁷ John 15:26, Galatians 4:6

⁸ Romans 2:8-9, Ephesians 2:1-10, John 14:6, Romans 10:14, John 1:12

⁹ John 10:28, 1 John 2:19, Romans 8:30, 1 John 3:9, Romans 5:9

2. Though this is a work of God, he uses the means of the local church, confession and repentance and prayer to keep us to the end.

*Eternity and life after death*¹⁰

1. Those who are in Christ will spend eternity in his presence in the New Heavens and the New Earth.
2. Those who are not in Christ will spend eternity in torment in Hell.

¹⁰ Acts 17:31, 2 Corinthians 5:10, Matthew 25:46, Revelation 22:20

Part 2: What is a Baptist Christian?

A Baptist Church can be explained by using the acrostic BAPTIST

1. Biblical authority

- a. Our final authority is scripture. We try, to the best of our ability, to do what the Bible says. Traditions are good and new ideas are good, but everything we do and teach is judged by scripture.¹¹

2. Autonomy of local church

- a. Each church is a unique body of believers. There is no other church or body that rules the church other than the congregation of the local church.
- b. Though there is no hierarchy SBC churches cooperate together for missions.
- c. Congregationalism: The final decision belongs to the congregation¹²
 - i. What should the congregation vote on?
 1. The leadership – Pastors, staff, deacons
 2. The membership – receiving and dismissing members
 3. The budget

3. Priesthood of all believers

- a. Each believer can come to Christ without the need of a priest and is indwelt with the Holy Spirit.

4. Two ordinances

- a. Believer's Baptism and the Lord's Supper.
- b. Baptism
 - i. Baptism is commanded by our Lord, by which we identify ourselves with him. Baptism is the proper obedient response to saving faith and is properly practiced by immersion in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.¹³
- c. The Lord's Supper
 - i. The Lord's Supper is a memorial given to the church to help us remember the death of Jesus in our place. It is to be practiced regularly within a local church. This ordinance is only for believers and should only be taken after self-examination.¹⁴

5. Individual soul liberty

- a. We cannot force a person to become a believer. That is a work between God and the individual. People do not become believers by being "born into it" but by being born again. Each person determines their belief and religion.

6. Saved Church membership

- a. All members are confessing believers in the Gospel. You cannot be a member of a Baptist church if you are not a believer in the Gospel.

¹¹ 1 Tim 3:16

¹² 1 Cor 5:4, Matthew 18:18-19

¹³ Matthew 28:19

¹⁴ 1 Corinthians 11:17-34

7. Two officers – Pastor and Deacon

- a. Pastor or Elders lead and direct the church. They are especially called to give oversight and to equip the congregation. They are responsible for the ministry of the word in the church.¹⁵
- b. Deacons are servants of the church and they are especially called to help the leadership of the church fulfill the ministry.

8. Separation of church and state¹⁶

- a. The church should not be governed by the civic authorities and the church does not try to be a civic authority.

The Southern Baptist Convention

Fellowship Baptist Church is a Southern Baptist Church and a member of the Southern Baptist Convention, South Carolina Baptist Convention and the Lexington Baptist Association. (*The following is from the SBC convention website*)

1. What is the Southern Baptist Convention?

- a. The SBC is a parachurch organization created by Baptist churches to coordinate and support international missions and pastoral training. The term "Southern Baptist Convention" refers to both the denomination and its annual meeting.

2. How does a church affiliate with the SBC?

- a. In order for a church to affiliate with the SBC, it must "be in friendly cooperation with the Convention and sympathetic with its purposes and work, and be "a bona fide contributor to the Convention's work during the fiscal year preceding" (Article III, Southern Baptist Convention Constitution)."

3. What is the Cooperative Program?

- a. The Cooperative Program is the unified method of supporting SBC mission causes. It coordinates the giving of individuals, churches, and state conventions to the SBC, and the distribution of that money to the various entities of the convention.

4. What is the SBC's stance on the autonomy of the local church?

- a. We recognize that in the New Testament there was no centralized ecclesiastical authority over the churches that forced the churches into any form of compliance. There was encouragement, exhortation, and admonition, but there was never enforcement. We strongly adhere to that principle. Jesus Christ is the head of the local church - we are not. Each church is responsible before God for the policies it sets and decisions it makes.

5. What is the significance of resolutions passed by the SBC for the local church?

- a. The Southern Baptist Convention makes official statements regarding specific issues by means of resolutions passed at our annual gatherings each June. Southern Baptist polity views these resolutions as expressions of opinions or

¹⁵ 1 Timothy 3:1-13, Titus 1:5-9

¹⁶ Romans 13:5-7

concern which are representative of the messengers attending the meeting, but are not binding upon any individual church or successive Conventions.

6. *How are SBC entities governed?*

- a. Trustees from each of the states are appointed by a committee to serve on trustee boards for each of the entities.

Part 3: What is a Fellowship Baptist Christian?

There are three essentials of Fellowship Baptist Church

Worship

- We desire to worship God as a body together and as individuals in every part of our life. God is supremely deserving of worship and worship is something we do every moment of every day.
- As a body, we gather on the Lord's Day to worship together through prayer, singing, the preaching of the word and the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper.
- As individuals we worship God privately through the practices of Bible reading and meditation and prayer. And we try to honor God in our works, recreation and homes. We do not see a separation between the sacred and secular. All of life is sacred and the Gospel and our worship of God affects everything we do, think and say and every motivation of our hearts.

Disciple/Discipleship

- One of the ways we worship God is through discipleship. We seek to make disciples. This begins with evangelism and mission. We are seeking to win neighbors and nations to the kingdom of God. When people repent and believe they become disciples, but though this is an essential step, this is only the first step.
- Discipleship is the process of growing ourselves into the image of God. We cannot do this on our own, but we do this together as a body. We develop community, hold each other accountable, encourage each other, and teach one another. Every member is called to be a disciple who makes disciples.
- You are encouraged to develop personal relationships with people for the purpose of being and making disciples.

Send

- Part of our discipleship is being sent.
- The church is sent to neighbors and nations. We gather for worship and then we are sent out into our workplaces, homes, neighborhoods and the world to bring the Gospel of Christ to the lost.
- We want every person to become a believer in Jesus Christ.
- Mission exist because worship does not. So because of the worth and value of our God we are sent out with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Vision Statement – Where we are going?

We desire to worship God and reach our neighbors by creating a Gospel-centered community of disciples who are sent out to make disciples.

Mission Statement – The reason we exist.

We exist to declare and to demonstrate the supreme value of God by making disciples, building true community, and sending people to neighbors and nations.

Benefits of Membership¹⁷

1. Community of believers
 - a. Fellowship
 - i. Being loved by others
 - ii. Being guarded by others - Accountability
 - iii. Being encouraged by others
 - b. Prayer
 - i. Our staff and deacons will be praying for you as well as others in this church. We believe that prayer is essential for the body of Christ.
2. Discipleship¹⁸
 - a. You will be built up in the Lord through teaching and discipling relationships, whether that is one on one or in a group like Sunday School.

Responsibilities of Membership

1. Discipleship
 - a. Care for other members – loving others.¹⁹
 - b. Intentional investment in members
 - i. Developing community
 - ii. Actively encouraging
 - iii. Coming and participating in the different services, primarily the Sunday worship.
 - c. Intentional evangelism and mission
 - i. We are bringing you in to send you out.
 - d. Personal responsibility to grow in your Christian walk
 - i. Fighting against sin. Developing Christian ethics.
2. Respect your leaders
 - a. You are willing to respect the leadership of this church and not try to undermine it. You are willing to pray for your leaders and their families. You are willing to

¹⁷ Hebrews 10:24-25, 1 Cor 12:14-27, 1 Thess 5:11, 1 John 3:17, Gal 6:10, Matthew 18:15-17, Hebrews 13:17, 1Tim 5:17, Gal 6:6

¹⁸ Matthew 28:19-20

¹⁹ Acts 2:42

hold your leaders accountable knowing that they also need discipleship, fellowship and community.

3. Serving and Giving
 - a. What are your spiritual gifts and how can you serve this church?²⁰
 - b. Giving of your time, heart and finances to this particular church.
4. Breadth and Depth of Commitment
 - a. *Depth* (meaningful membership):
 - i. We hope that our church is a group of people who really know and love each other beyond the superficial niceness you see in many communities. We want members to share their lives with each other, so we are asking you as a member to open your life to others. We know this can be scary, so we don't expect everyone to jump right in, but through our different ways to connect we hope and pray that you will help our church become a more loving and committed community.
 - b. *Breadth* (loving those who are different from you):
 - i. We do have groups for people of the same age, but the church best displays the glory of God when we have a love and commitment between members of a variety of backgrounds.

Putting it All Together

Putting these commands into practice requires three characteristics of our relationships in a local church:

1. Relationships that are *committed*.
2. Relationships with a *defined group* of people.
3. Relationships that give permission to speak hard words into your life.



²⁰ 1 Cor 12

Some Practical Ideas of How to get connected

- Here are a few suggestions on ways that you can begin to build these kinds of encouraging relationships at FBC. Each of these suggestions are steps in the process of connecting to others. We understand that getting to know people takes time and each person has their own levels of comfort. We want to encourage you to try some of these but don't feel pressure do all of them on day one. Start at the beginning and work your way down as you make relationships with people.
- *Stay around after services*
 - One very simple first step is to just stay around after the conclusion of our morning and evening services. We want members to stay around and talk, to speak to visitors and to people they don't know, and to make initial connections with other members, too. Certainly, this can be awkward at times. But please stay around anyway; make an effort to talk to others you don't know. Many members have met life-long friends in just this way.
- *Join a Sunday School class or other group*
 - Another helpful step may be to join an FBC Sunday School class. We don't require joining a small group as some churches do but we do try to make it an easy and welcoming option. We have Sunday School classes for all ages, and we have different ministries that focus on children, youth, graduates, parents and seniors.
 - Staff in the FBC office will be glad to talk with you about a group that might work well for you. But as helpful as they may be, we don't intend for these groups to be relational cul-de-sacs that define and, frankly, end your integration into the wider congregation at FBC. We want these groups to be a welcoming first-step to help you continue on to broader and deeper relationships within the congregation. Still, we all have to start somewhere, and many people find these groups an encouraging and manageable starting point.
- *Offer and accept hospitality*
 - Throughout the Bible one of the things that regularly marks God's people is their love for others, or hospitality. Admittedly some folks may feel awkward about being the one to invite people over, or out, when you are new. But we've tried to build a culture at FBC where hospitality is normal. So, we hope that members will reach out to new members, but we also hope that new members will step up and invite longer-term members and other new members over for a meal or out for an activity from the very early days of their membership. Living these kinds of open lives together is a big part of how we create and sustain the hospitable culture of a gospel community.
- *Initiate or accept a discipling relationship*
 - Almost certainly the best way to connect at FBC is to initiate or accept an offer to establish an intentional discipling relationship. Let me just say that one of the clearest ways that the love we read in John 15 is made visible is when we intentionally set out to do one another spiritual good in discipling relationships. It's fun to have friendships based on shared interests or hobbies or experiences. But it

- is wonderfully glorifying to God to have friendships based most fundamentally on a desire to encourage one another in the hope of the gospel.
- These are the kind of relationships where we intentionally set out to study Scripture, or to read a good Christian book, or to talk about this week's sermon all with the aim of encouraging one another to hope and trust more in God. As a new member of the church you don't need to sign up for anything or get anyone's permission you approach another member (of your gender) to establish a discipling relationship. But if you want some help in thinking through getting started, speak to a pastor, staff member or deacon.

Next Steps

1. Agree to what has been presented in this membership class.
2. Be baptized (if needed)
3. Write out your testimony and a brief explanation of the Gospel.
4. Be present at a church meeting (Sunday Morning service or business meeting) to be voted on by the body of FBC.
5. Get plugged in:
 - a. Join a Sunday School class or other group to get to know people.
 - b. Connect to a Discipleship partner especially if you are a new believer.
 - i. If you do not have someone actively discipling you, please ask a pastor or deacon about how to get connected to someone.
 - c. Be thinking about how and where you can serve FBC.

Pre-membership information form

Name: _____

Email: _____ **Phone #:** _____

I am currently a member of another church: YES NO

If YES, what church?

If YES, please explain why you are leaving your current church.

Are you leaving your current church on good terms and in good standing?

I have been baptized as a believer through immersion: YES NO

My Testimony

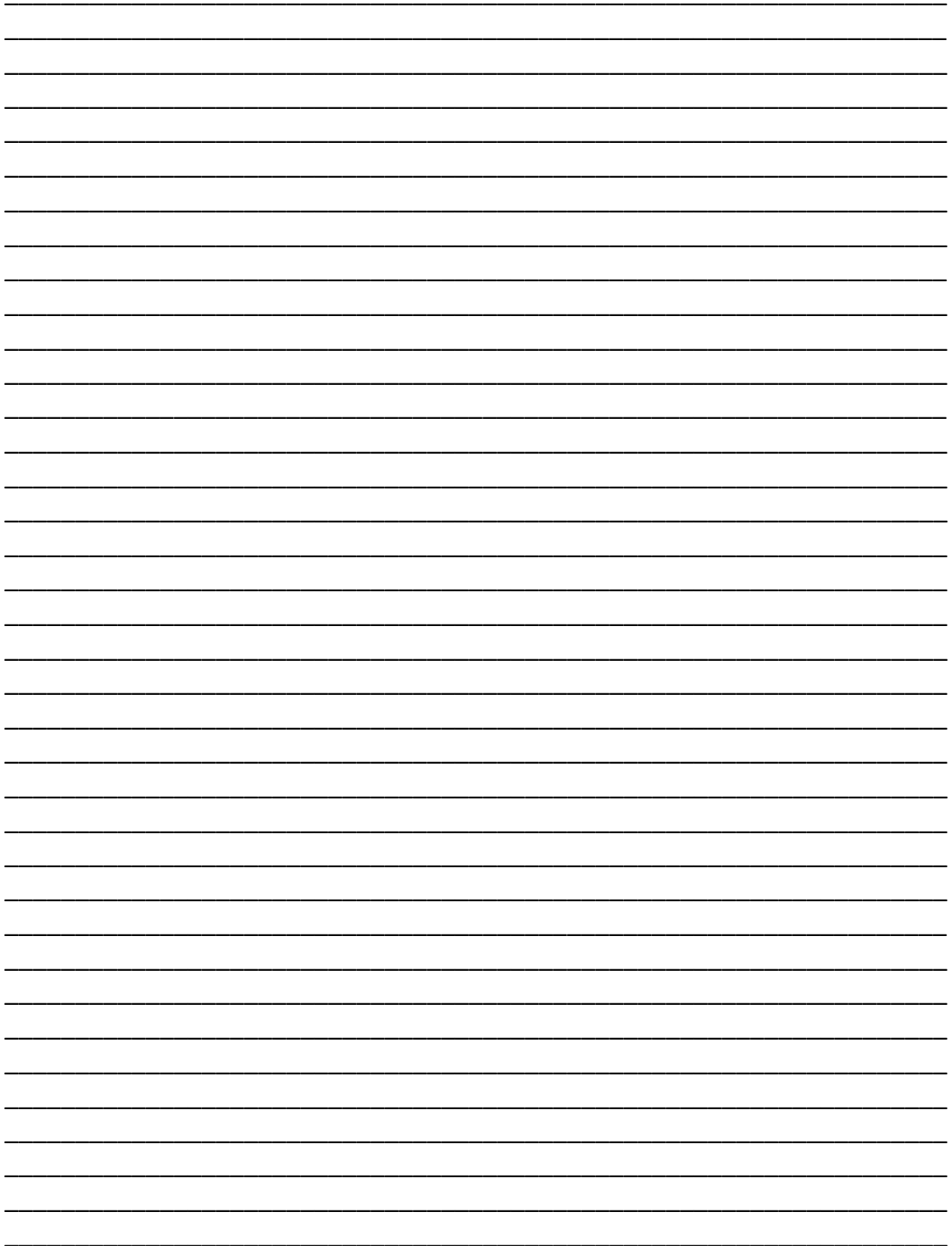
How do I write a testimony?

What we are looking for is that you can explain how God saved you. Don't worry that your testimony might not be a thrilling tale like the prodigal son. Your story is a beautiful story of what God has done. In your testimony there should be three things. First, you want to say what your life was like before Christ. If you were converted at a young age this might not be a long story, but basically an understanding that there was a time when you were not a believer in Jesus.

The second part of your story is how you came to believe in Jesus and what you believe about Jesus. This is where you not only tell your story, but the story of Jesus and the Gospel. Your testimony should help someone who has never heard the Gospel come to an understanding of what Jesus did. An example would be, "When I was 10 years old my mother told me the Gospel. That I was a sinner and God would judge me on my sins, but God has provided Jesus, who died for my sins and rose from the grave, so that I could be saved if I repented and believed in him."

The third part of the story tells us how Jesus has made an impact on your life. There may have been major changes that took place, or there may have been places where he loved and guided you and kept you from some sinful situation, or there may be a particular place where he provided his presence in a time of need. Remember, this is your story. If I were you, I would spend some time praying and asking God what he wants me to write. I would try to sum up this testimony in about one page. You can either handwrite on the page provided or you can type up and email the testimony to daniel@fellowshiplexington.com.

We believe that this exercise could be hugely beneficial for you and for our church. Just so you know, we are not publishing these testimonies to the church and only Daniel or a staff member or your deacon will be allowed to read them, unless you specifically give us permission. If you only want Daniel to read them, please let us know and we will make sure that your testimony does not go to anyone else. We look forward to reading how God has saved you and we hope that you are able to share your story with others as well.



How Much Should We Give?

An article adapted from Capitol Hill Baptist Church Elder Jamie Dunlop

When the offering plate passes you by on Sunday morning, how much does Jesus expect you to give?

Giving in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament, God commands his people to give 10 percent of their income to support the Levites—the religious teachers of the day. Plus, there were a couple more required offerings, all three of which added up to roughly 23 percent of an Israelite’s annual income, to say nothing of the temple tax and voluntary offerings.

Giving in the New Testament

Christians sometimes assume their responsibility starts and ends with giving 10 percent to a favorite charity. But that’s not quite right. Ten percent may be a good starting point based on Old Testament precedent. Think of Abraham giving that much to Melchizedek. But nowhere does the New Testament tell Christians to give a “tithe” (which means 10 percent).

Instead, Paul instructs each Christian to give “in keeping with his income” (1 Cor. 16:2), which is to say, as much as one is able. Elsewhere he commands, “Let the one who is taught the word share all good things with the one who teaches” (Gal. 6:6; see also 1 Cor. 9:14). And he commends one church for giving “with rich generosity” and “beyond their ability” (2 Cor. 8:2,3).

Yet the Bible also teaches that what we give to the church must be balanced with our other financial obligations. Paul says that a man who does not provide for his family’s basic needs “has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever” (1 Tim. 5:8).

Money is just one of many stewardships God has given to us, like time or relationships. And just as we should make “the best use of the time” (Eph. 5:16) for God’s glory, so we should with our money.

We recommend that you start by giving 10 percent of your income to the church (or less if biblical constraints such as 1 Tim. 5:16 so require). But more importantly we would encourage you to remember that every dollar in your bank account is an opportunity to bring glory to God. So, would that next dollar best be used for extra needs at the church? Or to hire a babysitter so you can disciple a younger Christian? Or to give your family rest and intentional time together on a family vacation? Or to buy this house versus that house because it allows you to do hospitality? You are utterly free in Christ to decide! The point is, use all your money for the Lord.

If you have no income, still work to give from what you do have (time, relationships, etc.) so that the first day you have an income it feels second-nature to give again.

Some Practical Counsel

- 1) *Give to your local church first.* Since the local church is the primary source of teaching, it

should be the primary recipient of your giving (see Gal. 6:6; 1 Cor. 9:14).

- 2) *Give regularly and deliberately.* Paul told the Corinthians to set aside money on the first day of every week (1 Cor. 16:2). Giving to the church should not be a spontaneous decision. Plan ahead. Build it into your budget.
- 3) *Give sacrificially and cheerfully.* God loves a cheerful giver and he calls all of us to take up our cross and follow him (2 Cor. 9:7; Luke 9:23). Our entire lives should be lived in sacrificial obedience, including our giving. Remember that whatever you give pales in comparison to what you are receiving in Christ.
- 4) *Seek wise counsel.* We should not give to impress others (Matt. 6:2), and yet it's foolish to make decisions about money alone (Prov. 15:22, 1 Tim. 6:10). Be transparent with at least someone at your church about your whole life—including how much and where you give.